

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 AID-05 DEAE-00 CIAE-00 INR-05

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 9114

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR, TU

SUBJ: OPIUM: DECISIONS FOR NEW CABINET; STRAW PROCESS COSTS

1. DURING COURSE OF NOVEMBER 21 CONVERSATION WITH POLITICAL COUNSELOR ON A RELATED SUBJECT(SEPTTEL), FOREIGN MINISTRY DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR UN AFFAIRS HALIK DAG DISCUSSED TWO OTHER POINTS: (A) DAG VOLUNTEERED HIS OPINION THAT NEW IRMAK CABINET, WITH EXCEPTION OF FOREIGN MINISTER ESENBEL, IS NOT INFORMED ABOUT DETAILS OF OPIUM QUESTION BEYOND WELL-KNOWN POINT THAT IT IS A SOURCE OF CONTENTION BETWEEN US AND TURKEY. HE NOTED THAT PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT (ECEVIT) HAD MADE A DECISION "IN PRINCIPLE" TO END THE INCISION OF POPPY PODS AND INITIATE THE STRAW PROCESS. DAG HAD COMMENTED BEFORE AND REPEATED THAT THE "IN PRINCIPLE" WOULD HAVE BEEN DROPPED SOON UNDER THE PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT. SINCE THAT WAS NOT DONE, IT WILL NOW BE PUT TO THE NEW GOVERNMENT TO DO SO, AND HE WAS OPTIMISTIC THAT SUCH A DECISION WOULD BE TAKEN. FIRST, HOWEVER, DAG REPORTED THAT HIS SUPERIORS BELIEVE MOST MEMBERS OF THE NEW CABINET NEEDED INTENSIVE BRIEFINGS ON THE ENTIRE OPIUM POPPY ISSUE AND ON THE STRAW PROCESS. HE THOUGHT THIS WOULD BE A MATTER OF HIGH PRIORITY ONCE IRMAK OR ANY OTHER NEW PRIME MINISTER ACTUALLY RECEIVED A VOTE OF CONFIDENCE.

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(B) POLITICAL COUNSELOR REFERRED TO DAG'S EARLIER

COMMENTS ABOUT GOT UNDERTAKING A STUDY OF WHAT LOSSES, IF ANY, WOULD RESULT TO FARMERS FROM ADOPTION OF STRAW PROCESS. DAG REPORTED THAT STUDY HAD BEEN COMPLETED, BUT HAD BEEN "UNSATISFACTORY" FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF ALL CONCERNED. THIS STUDY HAS CONCLUDED THAT THE LOSS TO THE FARMERS IN THE FIRST YEAR WOULD BE SOMEWHERE IN THE RANGE OF 7-12 MILLION TURKISH LIRA, BUT HAD ADDED THE IMPORTANT POINT THAT THERE WERE SO MANY VARIABLES A REALLY USEFUL FIGURE COULD NOT BE PRODUCED. THE GOT HAD, THEREFORE, DECIDED TO IGNORE THE STUDY AND LEARN WHAT WAS POSSIBLE ON THE SUBJECT FROM NEXT SUMMER'S HARVEST. DAG DID ADD, HOWEVER, THAT IF THE LOSS TO THE FARMERS SHOULD BE IN THE 7-12 MILLION LIRA RANGE, THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT WOULD PROBABLY BE ABLE TO COVER THE COST ITSELF.
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